

Mrs. DAVIS of California. I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT).

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlelady from California, and I rise in support of the Absentee Ballot TRAC Act. I commend her and Mr. MCCARTHY for crafting this commonsense measure, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

For the sake of good democracy, we must do all we can to have accessible, reliable, auditable voting. And we must do all we can to remove every reason for voters to believe that the voting system is not working well, to remove any doubt that they might have that votes are not counted as they intended.

□ 1845

Every year, some number of absentee ballots are requested by voters but not received, or delivered to voters but not returned to the election officials. The Election Assistance Commission's 2004 election administration voting survey reported that on average, only 89 percent of absentee ballots requested were returned. The 2006 Election Administration and Voting Survey reported that on average, a quarter of domestic civilian absentee ballots were rejected due to untimely receipt. And according to a survey of military and overseas voting in 2008 conducted by the non-partisan Overseas Vote Foundation, more than 1 in 5 American voters living overseas, including military personnel, did not receive their ballots on time for them to be counted in the 2008 election.

Every such instance of nonreceipt or nondelivery must be treated as a probable instance of wrongful disenfranchisement because we can assume voters would not have requested the ballots if they did not intend to vote. And that's why I support this commonsense measure. It would reimburse States for establishing programs to track and confirm the receipt of absentee ballots and make available to the individual who cast the ballot information on the receipt of the ballot, and information about whether or not the ballot was counted. This would be done by means of on-line access using an Internet site of the official's office.

I commend this bill to my colleagues, and I thank the gentleman and the gentlelady for proposing it.

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I urge the Members to support H.R. 2510, a bill to amend the Help America Vote Act. This bipartisan bill, sponsored by Representatives SUSAN DAVIS and KEVIN MCCARTHY, and reported unanimously from the Committee on House Administration, will reimburse states for the cost of tracking and confirming absentee ballots.

More voters than ever cast their ballots by mail. Many remain anxious that their ballots may not reach election offices on time—they question whether their votes are actually counted.

H.R. 2510 provides incentives to states to develop systems allowing voters to track their ballots. Voters will be able to use the internet

or a voter hotline to track whether the elections office has sent out a ballot, whether the completed ballot has arrived back at the registrar's office, whether the registrar has counted the ballot, and if not, why. Highly effective systems like these are already in place in counties in California, Washington, Virginia, Kansas and my home state of Pennsylvania.

Voters and election offices both benefit from ballot tracking technology. With voters able to track their ballots, transparency and voter confidence in America's election system will be greatly improved. Voters will be able to receive accurate and updated information on the status of their ballots and confirm whether they were counted.

Once this legislation is fully implemented, it will save costs for local governments and take the strain off election offices.

I urge all my colleagues to vote for this bipartisan legislation.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I have no additional speakers. I urge passage of this legislation. And I yield back my remaining time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2510.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

COMMENDING THE CONGRESS OF LEADERS OF WORLD AND TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 535) commending the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions for calling upon all nations to live in peace and mutual understanding.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 535

Whereas religious leaders can be a decisive factor in maintaining peace and security in the world;

Whereas a Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions was established in 2003;

Whereas the purpose of the Congress is to advance tolerance, development, and security;

Whereas the Congress provides a forum for improving understanding and mutual cooperation among religious communities from around the world;

Whereas the Congress considers interfaith dialogue one of the most important instruments for the maintenance of peace and harmony among peoples and nations;

Whereas the Congress regularly holds forums that address, among other issues, religious freedom, inter-religious dialogue, and the role of religious leaders in strengthening global security;

Whereas the world's major religions, including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Shinto, and Taoism are represented in the Congress;

Whereas religious leaders representing more than 26 nations, including Israel, Egypt, Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Armenia, South Korea, China, India, Thailand, the United States, Switzerland, France, Japan, and the Holy See, participate in the Congress;

Whereas a Secretariat of the Congress was established by the leaders and representatives of the world and traditional religions in 2003 as a permanent body of the interfaith dialogue;

Whereas the Secretariat of the Congress adopted resolutions to convene the second and third Congress in 2006 and 2009; and

Whereas the third Congress was held on July 1-2, 2009: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) commends the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions for calling upon all nations to live in peace and mutual understanding; and

(2) supports freedom of religion and conscience throughout the world as a fundamental human right and as a source of stability for all countries.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from American Samoa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from American Samoa?

There was no objection.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 535, commending the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions for calling upon all nations to live in peace and mutual understanding. The Congress was organized in 2003 in recognition of the growing importance of world religions in responding to emerging threats and global epidemics. The Congress is held every 3 years and seeks to foster greater dialogue and cooperation among world religions to address the serious challenge we are facing like terrorism, poverty, war, extremism, and the global collapse of financial markets.

This year I had the privilege of attending the third Congress. Approximately 77 delegations from 35 countries participated, including leading clerics and scholars representing Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and other religious traditions. The delegation from the Vatican was led by Cardinal Jean-Louis Turan. Israel's President, Shimon Peres delivered the keynote address, and the Church of Jesus

Christ of Latter-day Saints was also represented for the first time.

Because religious leaders can be a decisive factor in maintaining peace and security in the world, I encourage my colleagues to vote in favor of House Resolution 535. This resolution supports freedom of religion and conscience throughout the world as a fundamental right and as a source of stability for all countries and commends the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions for the work it is doing to advance tolerance and understanding. Again, I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 535. This resolution commends the Congress of leaders of World and Traditional Religions and expresses support for freedom of religion as a fundamental human right and a source of stability for all countries. I support this resolution and the broader cause of promoting freedom of religion.

However, I have some concerns about this measure. Kazakhstan initiated the effort to establish the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions and its capital served as the location for the past three gatherings. However, our U.S. Department of State's report on international religious freedom, as well as a number of human rights NGOs, underscore that Kazakhstan has considerable problems with its treatment of some of its religious minority groups. Some of the reported instances of religious intolerance in Kazakhstan include police officials disrupting religious meetings in private homes, confiscation of religious literature, fines, detentions, harassment and deportation of unregistered missionaries.

It has also been reported that the government-controlled media in Kazakhstan has increased its negative coverage of what they consider non-traditional religions such as Evangelical Christians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Hare Krishnas and Scientologists, depicting those groups as dangerous sects. Although we should support the efforts of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, we must be careful not to inadvertently provide political legitimacy to the government of Kazakhstan in its treatment of some of its religious minorities. Furthermore, Kazakhstan will assume the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2010, and it is important that those responsible nations hold it accountable to the commitments that it has made to implement democratic reforms and to protect human rights.

Again, I would like to express my support for this resolution, although with some reservation, and I ask my colleagues to do the same.

I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 535, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

RECOGNIZING DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 550) recognizing the "Day of the African Child" on June 16, 2009, devoted to the theme of child survival and to emphasize the importance of reducing maternal, newborn, and child deaths in Africa.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 550

Whereas the "Day of the African Child" has been celebrated on June 16 each year since 1991, when it was first initiated by the Organization of African Unity;

Whereas the African Union has designated child survival as the theme of the "Day of the African Child", June 16, 2009;

Whereas the African Union Heads of State and Government decided to make child survival a theme of their 15th Ordinary Session in July 2010;

Whereas according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), sub-Saharan Africa remains the most difficult place in the world for a child to survive;

Whereas every year in sub-Saharan Africa, 1.2 million babies die in the first month of life and roughly 1 in every 6 children fail to reach their fifth birthday, and the actual number of children under five years old dying each year is increasing;

Whereas an estimated 9 out of 10 women in sub-Saharan Africa will lose a child during their lifetime, and an estimated 700 women will die each day of pregnancy-related causes;

Whereas the top five killers of children under five in sub-Saharan Africa are preventable diseases (neonatal causes, such as respiratory infections, pneumonia, malaria, diarrhea, and HIV/AIDS) which we know how to treat and cure;

Whereas the high level of maternal and child mortality and morbidity in Africa can be attributed, according to African Union Ministers of Health, to weak health systems, a low level of skilled attendance at birth, poor health infrastructure, and inadequate financial resources;

Whereas some sub-Saharan African countries have sustained high annual rates of reduction in child mortality through strong political will, sufficient investment, and concerted action;

Whereas over the past three decades, United States international child survival and maternal health programs have helped save millions of lives in Africa and elsewhere; and

Whereas last year the G8 Summit leaders, meeting in Hokkaido, Japan, stated on July 8, 2008, "We reiterate our support to our African partners' commitment to ensure that by 2015 all children have access to basic health care (free wherever countries choose to provide this).": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the "Day of the African Child";

(2) affirms its solidarity to address the challenge of maternal, newborn, and child mortality;

(3) salutes the health professionals and community health workers on the front lines in Africa who are extending health care and hope to families across the continent; and

(4) reaffirms the importance of United States partnership with African leaders and communities in reducing child, newborn, and maternal deaths from treatable and preventable causes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from American Samoa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from American Samoa?

There was no objection.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, and I yield myself such time as I may consume. I certainly want to thank our senior ranking member of our House Foreign Affairs Committee, my good friend, the gentlelady from Florida, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for her support of this legislation, as well as the chairman of our Foreign Affairs Committee, the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN).

Madam Speaker, the Day of the African Child has been celebrated on June 16 each year since 1991 when it was first initiated by the Organization of African Unity, the precursor of the African Union. According to the United Nations Children's Fund, or UNICEF, sub-Saharan Africa remains the most difficult place in the world for a child to survive. Every year in sub-Saharan Africa, 1.2 million babies die in the first month of life. Roughly 1 in every 6 children fail to reach their fifth birthday. Despite significant overall progress in decreasing mortality rates for children under age 5, each year an